



Alabama Department of Environmental Management
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MEMORANDUM

FROM: Michael J. Cruise, Chief
Removals and Response Unit
Environmental Services Branch

SUBJECT: Storm Debris Cleanup

To facilitate the removal of debris resulting from catastrophic natural events, the following guidance is provided and shall supersede all previous guidance the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) has provided on this subject. In addition, attached is the [Department's guidance on open burning](#) and [Emergency disposal following natural disasters](#).

- Regulated solid waste debris resulting from catastrophic natural events should be removed from all impacted areas.
- Vegetative and wood waste, including but not limited to stumps, logs, limbs, brush, and leaves are not regulated solid waste. NOTE: vegetative and wood waste described herein which are contaminated with other special waste (as defined in ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-13-1-.03 (131)) is considered regulated solid waste and should be disposed of in a landfill permitted to accept that type waste.
- The abandonment of regulated solid waste found in storm debris constitutes establishment of an unauthorized dump, contrary to the requirements of the Alabama Solid Wastes & Recyclable Materials Management Act. Unauthorized dumps constitute a nuisance and a public health hazard, can result in additional damage to adjacent property and structures by creating impediments in surface water courses which flood, are breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other disease carrying vectors, are targets for fires set by vandals or careless acts, and encourage additional illegal disposal with their existence. Accordingly, when establishing a disposal site for vegetative waste, regulated solid waste shall be excluded. The landowner and/or person(s) responsible for the creation, contribution to, or operation of an unauthorized dump is responsible for its abatement, whether on public or private property.
- Do not place vegetative debris in wetlands or standing water.
- Avoid erosion features or low-lying areas. If not possible, ensure no impedance of water flow.
- Other agencies, such as FEMA or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, may have other criteria for the establishment of a vegetative debris disposal area and it is suggested that these agencies be contacted before a site is authorized by local governments.
- If burning of the vegetative debris is to take place at these sites, the burning must comply with the current ADEM "Guidelines for Open Burning of Natural Disaster Debris" (see above link for guidance on open burning).
- Vegetative debris disposal locations should be tracked by county officials, and a map showing the locations of these sites should be sent to the ADEM Environmental Services Branch – Removals and Response Unit as soon as emergency cleanup activities have decreased and time permits.

If there are questions regarding disaster debris management, please contact Mike Cruise at (334) 271-7938 or mcruise@adem.alabama.gov.

